

## DETERMINING FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL EFFORT FOR CAREER AWARDS

RELEASE DATE: August 3, 2004

NOTICE: NOT-OD-04-056

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Almost all NIH supported career development awards (Ks) require that recipients devote a specified minimum percentage of their full-time professional effort (in most cases 75%) to the goals of the career award. In addition, policy requires a full-time appointment at the applicant organization, with salary based on a full-time, 12-month staff appointment.

NIH has previously defined this requirement as encompassing the entirety of the professional commitments of the investigator, both within and outside the applicant institution. Although designed to protect the investigator's time for research and career development, this definition recently has been cited as problematic because investigator appointments are becoming increasingly complex.

In an effort to address these concerns and to foster more consistent treatment across all NIH Institutes and Centers, the following policy regarding the determination of full-time professional effort will now be applied to all K awards:

A career award recipient meets the required commitment of total professional effort as long as: 1) the individual has a full-time appointment with the applicant organization; and 2) the minimum percentage of the candidate's commitment required for the proposed Career award experience is covered by that appointment. Please note that a candidate may propose a career award experience that involves sites beyond the applicant institution or organization, provided that the goals of the total experience are encompassed and supported under the appointment with the applicant organization.

This policy also applies to individuals who hold additional appointments with an independent clinical practice plan, the Veterans Administration or other organizations. Assuming a full-time appointment with the applicant organization, a candidate meets the professional effort requirement of the career award as long as the minimum percentage required for the proposed Career award experience is supported by the appointment at the applicant organization. Responsibilities outside of the applicant organization appointment are not restricted but also cannot be used to meet any minimum effort requirement.

The following example is illustrative:

An investigator has a full time appointment at a university and a half time appointment with another organization (VA or independent clinical practice plan). Under this new policy, the investigator can be supported because the university and candidate can commit at least 75% of the full time appointment to the award.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify this requirement to ensure that the criteria for proposing and charging effort on career awards are consistent with the other NIH funding mechanisms. We also expect that this clarification will expand the pool of eligible candidates for NIH career awards.

This revised policy applies to all existing Career Development Award announcements for all applications and resubmissions submitted on/after October 1, 2004.

For additional information concerning this change contact:

Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration

Office of Extramural Research

National Institutes of Health

Tel.: 301-435-0938

E-mail: [grantspolicy@mail.nih.gov](mailto:grantspolicy@mail.nih.gov)

FAX: 301-435-3059

---

[Return to Volume Index](#)

[Return to NIH Guide Main Index](#)

---



Department of Health  
and Human Services



National Institutes of Health (NIH)  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892